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ABSTRACT

The transcript of a values awareness lesson in communicable diseases is presented to illustrate the two stages of a typical values class--introducing the lesson and implementing the lesson. In this case, an overhead slide-transparency is used (along with prefacing remarks) to lead the class into considering those whom a gonorrhea-infected youth should consider informing concerning his health status. After discussion of the transparency, the focus-setting question ("What do you think Gerald should do?") is introduced, and the lesson implementation stage is entered. During the discussion, the teacher must systematically intervene (without interrupting or interfering with the integrity of the discussion) to facilitate values awareness. Ten goals of a values awareness teaching strategy are presented. (MJB)

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THE VALUES AWARENESS TEACHING STRATEGY
AN OVERVIEW

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THE VALUES AWARENESS TEACHING STRATEGY, AN OVERVIEW

*STUDENTS DEVELOP A CONCEPT OF VALUE AS
THEY COME TO UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES. THEN,
THEY USE THAT CONCEPT AS A WAY TO
UNDERSTAND THE WORLD AROUND THEM.*

While developing students' knowledge of societal values is an expected outcome of schooling, by no means is it enough. Parents want the schools to do more than inform students about societal values alone. They also want their children to learn how to respond effectively to the kinds of value-laden problems they'll encounter in their daily lives. Fundamental to the students' knowledge of societal values and their ability to respond effectively to problems in the arena of values are an operational concept of value and an awareness of their own values. Developing an operational concept of value and the students' ability to explicate their own values are primary goals of the Values Awareness Teaching Strategy.

Values awareness lessons don't just happen in the classroom because the students read a new textbook or because they participate in some group activities. Values awareness is a complex, demanding, and dynamic process which unfolds when the teacher creates a classroom climate that fosters thoughtful and responsible interaction among the students about topics appropriate for the classroom.

But values awareness takes more than an effective classroom climate. In addition, the teacher must also know what to do to help students move toward the lesson goals. Good intentions aren't enough. The professional educator needs relevant knowledge about values and what can be done to facilitate values awareness and the related skills necessary to implement that knowledge effectively in the classroom.

THE FLOW OF A TYPICAL VALUES AWARENESS LESSON

In general, most values awareness lessons move through two distinct phases: introducing the Lesson and Implementing the Lesson. To introduce a values awareness lesson the teacher must either state or surface the lesson topic and also establish the way of working, the lesson structure. The stage may be set for a lesson topic by engaging the students in a brief discussion about a transparency, picture, or slide, reading an appropriate short story aloud to the students or letting them read it silently by themselves; viewing an appropriate open-ended discussion starter film or filmstrip; recapping a recent or current controversial school, community, national, or world event; participating in a values clarification, simulation, or human relations activity.

With the stage set, the lesson topic is usually presented in the form of a discussion question. For a values awareness lesson, the most effective discussion questions are based on either of the following illustrative stems: *How do you feel about...* or *What should be done about...* Questions such as these invite students to make value judgments or suggest courses of action. To do either, people use their values. When students have done so, it's possible for the teacher to help them surface the values which underlie the judgments or actions they've proposed. And that's what values awareness is all about.

Most frequently the values awareness lesson discussion question is presented to the group by the teacher. There are instances, however, in which the teacher designs the introductory phase of the lesson so the students suggest a topic or select one they'd like to discuss from a prepared list.

Once the lesson has been adequately introduced and the students informed about how they are to work, the lesson moves into the Implementation Phase. Working either as a total class or in groups, the teacher implements the lesson by inviting the students to respond to the discussion

question. As they do so, the teacher uses specific teaching behaviors through which: (1) the climate and integrity of the lesson is implemented (the lesson structure); (2) the student's growth toward values awareness goal is facilitated; and (3) the student's growth may be diagnosed. The discussion is concluded as the teacher initiates the Post Process Dialogue. This is a kind of debriefing session in which the students are invited to comment on such issues as what went on during the lesson, how they felt about their participation in the discussion, and so on. In essence, this part of the lesson is intended to help students reflect on their experience from both an intellectual and affective vantage point.

A GLIMPSE OF A VALUES AWARENESS LESSON

To explore the flow of a Values Awareness Teaching Strategy further, it's helpful to review an illustrative lesson. In so doing it is possible to highlight those teaching behaviors useful in working toward values awareness lessons goals. It's also possible to get some feeling for the relationship between the students and their teacher. While the topic of the discussion in this illustrative lesson is more appropriate for junior and senior high school students in a health education class, the lesson climate and the teaching behaviors are the same regardless of the age of the students or the subject matter.

Introducing the Lesson

Ms. Pollock's class was involved in a unit of study in the area of diseases and disorders. Up to this time the students had studied primarily about leading communicable diseases. In so doing they gained information about various kinds of communicable diseases and learned of ways that each disease they studied may be transmitted.

Ms. Pollock had also spent several lessons on developing the students' concept of immunity including what it is, how people become immune, and so on. In addition, some lessons were

directed to help the students learn to read and interpret data provided in selected charts and graphs as a way to determine the present and past occurrence of the diseases being studied.

One of the diseases studied that caught the students' attention because people don't develop an immunity to it, because of its prevalence, and because of the social stigma attached to it, was gonorrhea. In view of their interests, Ms. Pollock saw this as an opportunity to use gonorrhea as a topic which would help students become aware of their values about social responsibility in relation to communicable diseases.

To set the stage for the discussion, Ms. Pollock first made some general comments to the class about how they would work.

Ms. Pollock: *What I would like to do is to invite you to think about a particular issue. I'm going to present this issue to you in the form of a transparency. As we work I want you to feel that you can share what you think should happen, or ought to happen. You can share your own opinion about it or you can agree or disagree with other people's ideas or opinions. If you want some information, you can ask me and I'll try to give you the information you want, if I have it. Also, let's have one person talk at a time so we can hear what each person has to say.*

I want you to feel comfortable in discussing the situation as you see it. I'm not going to call on anyone during the discussion. If you have something you want to say, it's up to you to make your comment. Raise your hand, speak out if there's a moment of silence or...

And I'm not going to make any judgments about anyone's comments. Furthermore, I'm not going to act as an amplifier for the group. If someone

Ms. Pollock Con't.

*speaks and you can't hear or if you couldn't understand what they were saying,
it will be up to you to let them know.*

Then Ms. Pollock put a transparency she had adapted from the School Health Education Study Materials* onto the overhead projector. This is a reproduction of the transparency she used:



* Russell, Robert D. *Illustrating How The Health Status of Any Family Member May Affect Living Patterns of The Family Group*. Visual Packet No. 4361, School Health Education Study, St. Paul: 3M Company 1967. Visual 1

Ms. Pollock then invited the students to comment about what they felt was happening in the transparency.

Ms. Pollock: *Okay, let's begin. Can you tell me what's going on here; what do you see happening?*

Joe: *Well, that guy got kind of busted for gonorrhea and he's wondering what he should do about it.*

Ms. Pollock: *Okay.*

ED: *Well, I don't think he's being busted. They just discovered that he had it, and I bet he's trying to decide what to do about it.*

Ms. Pollock: *Then you're saying that he's just found out that he has it and he's trying to figure out what he should do?*

Ed: *Yes.*

Jim: *He's probably also afraid that his friends will find out that he has it and what might happen to him.*

Ms. Pollock: *All right. It's kind of the way it seems, would you agree?*

Students nod in apparent agreement.

Okay. Then, here's the situation. The guy is at the Midtown Clinic and the doctor is telling him, 'You've got gonorrhea'.

This brief discussion about the transparency assured that all of the students would be interpreting the transparency in the same way. The students' comments also set the stage for the teacher to pose the focus setting question, which she wrote along the bottom of the transparency as she spoke.

Ms. Pollock: *Here's a question I'd like to invite you to respond to: What do you think Gerald should do?*

At this point the introductory phase of the lesson was completed. The teacher used a transparency on an overhead projector to set the stage for the discussion question she was to introduce. She also had set the lesson structure by informing the students about how they were to work. Of course, if the students had participated in several such discussions prior to this one Ms. Pollock may have only commented that they would work as they had before. In this case, however, she chose to be more detailed in structuring for the lesson. Finally, the discussion question was presented to the group.

Implementing the Lesson

Having concluded the introductory phase of the lesson, Ms. Pollock used non-verbal communication to reinforce the lesson structure as she waited silently for them to respond to the discussion topic.

After a few seconds of silence, one of the students spoke. The implementation phase of the lesson began.

Jim: *I'm wondering if the doctor is going to tell his mom and dad.*

Ms. Pollock: *Are you asking me if the doctor has to tell his dad?*

Jim: *Yeah, if he has to tell them.*

Ms. Pollock: *No. According to the California law right now, the doctor does not have to report to the parents of a minor when he or she has a venereal disease: syphilis or gonorrhea.*

Ms. Pollock: *Okay.*

Aieta: *But that's not all. He should also tell the girl he was with. She ought to know about it too.*

Jan: *I agree. She could have it and not know it and that could mess her up, but good.*

Jack: *Right. She could have given it to him or he might have given it to her.*

Ms. Pollock: *I see.*

Daphne: *Just think of all the girls Gerald could infect if he doesn't get treated, and...*

Students: *Several students in the group laugh and begin commenting privately to each other about Daphne's comment.*

Ms. Pollock: *Wait a minute, people, let's give Daphne a chance to finish what she has to say.*

Daphne: *Well, I just wanted to say that it can give him lots of other trouble too.*

Ms. Pollock: *What do you mean by "other trouble," Daphne?*

Daphne: *It wud cause him some pain.*

Up to this point the teacher's primary role has been to establish the lesson climate. That is, she informed the students about how they would be working. She used silence to indicate to the students that it was their responsibility to initiate and carry the discussion. She took action to maintain the lesson structure when the structure broke down; when several students began talking at the same time. She sought to understand students by clarifying when she did not, and acknowledging when she did. When the students requested data, Ms. Pollock made it available when she was able to do so.

Since the discussion seemed well under way, Ms. Pollock felt the time was right to begin helping the students move toward the goals for Values Awareness lessons. In doing so, she looked for those moments during the student's discussion which would be appropriate for her to use some teaching behaviors specifically intended to yield the lesson goals. The discussion continues.

Ms. Pollock: *Okay Daphne. You just reported a prediction about what might happen if he doesn't get some kind of treatment.*

Daphne: *Yeah.*

Carlton: *I think the first thing Jerry should do is check in with a clinic or see that doctor as soon as possible to take care of the gonorrhea.*

Flossy: *You mean he shouldn't tell his girlfriend?*

Carlton: *All I was saving was that he should get going on the treatment right away. He's right there in the doctor's office.*

Ms. Pollock: *Uh-huh. That's one thing he could do.*

Jack: *I think one thing for sure is he ought to tell any girl he's had contact with.*

Ms. Pollock: *Jack, would you be willing to share why you feel that way?*

Jack: *Well, I think he has the responsibility to any girls he's had contact with to tell them. He might have given it to them or caught it from one of them and they might not know they have it. Anyway, he should let them know. That's what he should do and maybe he can help keep some other people from getting it.*

Ms. Pollock: *Jack, let me try something and you help me understand if this is what you're saying. It seems to me that one of your values about people is that they behave responsibly toward others, especially where diseases are involved. Did I catch it?*

Jack: *i never thought about it that way, but, I guess you're right. Yeah. I do think people should let others know about those kinds of things instead of being ashamed or something and not telling them. That's not right.*

Ms. Pollock: *Okay, Jack.*

Fern: *A while ago somebody said that the doctor or clinic doesn't have to tell your parents if you have venereal disease. So, I think he should get the treatment, tell his girlfrien - or girlfriends - but not tell his parents.*

Ms. Pollock: *What do you think might happen, Fern, if he does what you said?*

Fern: *He'd get better and his girlfriend would too if she gets treated and his father wouldn't be disappointed with him.*

Ms. Pollock: *His mother and father wouldn't be disappointed?*

Fern: *Right, like most parents if they thought you had a venereal disease.*

Ms. Pollock: *Okay, Fern.*

Lee: *I agree with Fern that he should take the treatment but not tell his parents because if he told his parents then they might not trust him or let him go out afterwards, or something like that, because they might be afraid that he'd do the same thing over again. So, if he didn't tell his parents then he wouldn't be like grounded all the time for the rest of his life.*

Ms. Pollock: *Okay. You're agreeing with him.*

Lee: *Yeah.*

Ms. Pollock: *You're making a value judgment that that's a better approach, as Fern said. Lee, can you think of any circumstances in which it would be a good idea to tell his parents?*

In these few illustrative student-teacher interactions drawn from an actual classroom lesson, it's apparent that Ms. Pollock's lesson was more than an open-ended discussion or rap session. In a good open-ended discussion the teacher may not participate at all other than setting up the

discussion and posing the question for the discussion. In a Values Awareness lesson, however, the teacher must be able to systematically make those interventions intended to facilitate Values Awareness without interrupting or otherwise interfering with the integrity of the discussion. Thus, the teacher must not only know what interventions to make and when they should be made, but it's also critical that the teacher know how to make those interventions so the discussion won't become teacher dominated or teacher directed.

As in the case of most values awareness lessons, the implementation phase of the lesson concluded with a short process dialogue. At this time, Ms. Pollock invites the students to respond to questions such as:

How do you feel about the discussion we just had?

How can you deal with a person who seems to be monopolizing the discussion?

While there is a wide range of questions that may have been posed in a process dialogue, Ms. Pollock used these because she felt they were most relevant to what had happened among members of the class during the discussion. Naturally, she posed the first question and allowed the students adequate time to think and express themselves before going on to the second question.

A GLIMPSE, SOME DISCLAIMERS

The glimpse of a values awareness lesson provided on the preceding pages was presented so the reader would be able to get some feeling for both the climate of a values awareness lesson as well as what the teacher did toward the goals of values awareness. Certainly the actual discussion was more lengthy than the script provided. More students were involved and the teacher utilized several teaching behaviors in addition to those presented.

While Ms. Pollock used a transparency as a way to set the stage for the discussion question that would help students become aware of their values about social responsibility in relation to communicable diseases, a similar discussion might have been initiated in other ways. For example, a film, filmstrip, short story, newspaper article or class or group activity that may deal with communicable diseases could have been used to set the stage for the discussion topic. For this lesson Ms. Pollock involved the entire class in the discussion. Similar discussions could have been held with smaller groups of students as well. And, though this question was appropriate for Ms. Pollock's junior high students, a question such as, *How do you feel about people who don't cover their mouths when they sneeze?* would probably be more appropriate for primary grade students.

There's little doubt that having the proper classroom equipment and materials is important, as is adequate classroom facilities that make classroom discussions feasible. However, a Values Awareness lesson is more than equipment, materials, and facilities. The most crucial aspect of the lesson is the teacher. And the teacher is what the teacher does and doesn't do as he or she interacts with students.

GOALS OF THE VALUES AWARENESS TEACHING STRATEGY

One way to get a flavor of what a Values Awareness lesson is like is to observe a lesson or review a lesson script. Another way is to consider the goals intrinsic to these kinds of lessons. Following is a list of the goals of the Values Awareness Teaching Strategy.

The Values Awareness Teaching Strategy is intended to develop students':

- *Awareness that the decisions they make are based in part on the values they hold.*
- *Awareness of the processes they or others use during a discussion and the effects of those processes on others.*
- *Awareness of some of the values they hold.*
- *Ability to systematically explicate their own values.*
- *Ability to systematically infer the values of others.*
- *Ability to recognize when they or others in a discussion are shifting topics.*
- *Ability to use language patterns that enable them to disagree with others while maintaining open lines of communication.*
- *Ability to interact effectively with others whose values differ.*
- *Ability to communicate their feelings, opinions and attitudes effectively.*
- *Ability to explicate the conditions that influence (1) the successful implementation of a course of action; or (2) the prioritization of one's values.*

Students' growth toward these goals takes place in three ways. First, for some students, participation in the discussion alone provides experiences that lead to the achievement of several of these goals. A second and perhaps more predictable way of facilitating students' growth is what the teacher does during the discussion. Finally, another significant element in facilitating students' growth toward some of these goals is the process dialogue following the discussion. It's obvious, though, that these goals are not achieved as a result of one or two values awareness lessons at the beginning of a semester. For most students, these goals are accomplished only as an outgrowth of many values awareness lessons throughout their elementary and secondary school lives.